

55. The information given in the following statement is in accordance with paragraph 11 of Government Resolution No. 1899 of the 15th March 1891:—

Division.	No. of complaints disposed of under Section 67.	No. of cases in which compensation has been accepted.	No. of appeals against the proceedings.	Manner in which appeals have been disposed of.
Sukkur	788	788	...	...
Naushahro	97	97	...	...
Hyderabad	87	87	...	...
Jerruck	363	363	...	...
Total ...	1,335	1,335	...	...

(2) *Protection from Fire.*

56. The results of the year's fire protection as compared with those for the year 1893-94 are shown below:—

Division.	NO. OF FIRES.		AREA BURNT.	
	1893-94.	1894-95.	1893-94.	1894-95.
			Acres.	Acres.
Sukkur	79	44	3,727	2,884
Naushahro	3	6	109	192
Hyderabad	9	3	516	136
Jerruck	16	7	3,457	332
Total ...	107	60	7,809	3,544

57. Although there is a decrease in the number of fires as well as in the area traversed by them, this apparent improvement in fire conservancy cannot be altogether ascribed to greater vigilance on the part of Forest subordinates or to any special fire protection measures. The river rose very early and the inundation was an exceptionally high one. Many of the forests received a copious supply of water, which was followed by a luxuriant growth of grass. Under such favourable circumstances, it is not to the interests of the cattle breeders, who are the principal incendiaries to set the forests a-light.

58. In Upper Sind, however, the forests are occasionally burnt to manufacture dead wood when the supply gets scarce in the forests in the vicinity of large towns such as Rohri, Sukkur, Shikarpur, Larkana, &c., but when the origin of the fires is traced to this source, the forests are closed to people engaged in this trade.

SUKKUR DIVISION.—Since the present Divisional Forest Officer, Mr. Dalal, has been in charge he has devoted his special attention to fire conservancy, with the result that all the fires reported during the year were speedily extinguished before they had time to get out of hand.

NAUSHAHRO DIVISION.—The fires were not destructive and were due to accident.

HYDERABAD DIVISION.—In the forests of this division the growing stock is gradually surmounting and killing the undergrowth of reeds and grass, and it is only in new formations in which the tree-growth has not established itself that there is any risk from fires.

JERRUCK DIVISION.—Although the favourable climatic conditions mentioned before are answerable somewhat for the improvement, the Divisional Forest Officer reports that this is due to greater vigilance on the part of Ranger Dalpatrai Jethanand, in whose range (Shahbandar) fires did so much damage in the previous year, and to the fact that double grazing fees were levied as a punishment in the tracts traversed by fire. In order to prevent the spread of fires from Revenue waste lands into the Huderani and Penah forests, in which disastrous fires used to occur every year, their boundary-line was fire-traced and a constant look out was kept, with the gratifying result that they escaped burning for the first time in their history.

(3) *Regulation of Grazing and Protection from Cattle.*

59. Grazing is regulated under the rules sanctioned by the Commissioner in Sind in his No. 2237, dated 30th June 1886. The forests are divided into three classes according to their grazing capacities, and in each of which a different scale of fees is levied. The dues under these rules do not press heavily on the people at large, and they are paid by them without demur.

Area opened and closed to grazing.

60. The following statement shows the areas closed and open to grazing at the close of the year 1894-95 :—

Division.	OPEN.		CLOSED.		TOTAL AREA.		REMARKS.
	Square miles.	Acres.	Square miles.	Acres.	Square miles.	Acres.	
Sukkur	380	469	23	489	404	318	1·160 square miles closed to browsers.
Naushahro	230	59	9	323	239	382	2·200 do. do.
Hyderabad	135	125	61	473	196	598	31·207 do. do.
Jerruck	148	434	7	82	155	516	
Total	894	447	102	87	996	534	

61. It has been the custom to continue year after year to fence and close against grazing all the compartments exploited for locomotive fuel without taking any steps to open such of them in which reproduction was assured.

62. The subordinates naturally supposed the period of closure was for 12 years, the rotation fixed for exploiting both pure babul as well as mixed forests. At this rate, the whole of the productive area would be closed in time. The absolute closing of the forests in Sind is not at all necessary; the conditions for reproduction are exceptionally favourable, and the result of such a procedure, even if it was required to be introduced, would entail great hardship on the surrounding agricultural population. Directly, therefore, it was brought to my notice, first in the Sukkur division and subsequently in the others, that a large number of compartments could be safely opened, the following simple rules were framed for the guidance of Range Forest Officers :—

- (1) In the compartments in which Kunder (Prosopis Spicigera) predominates and which come annually under the influence of the floods, oxen and buffaloes should be admitted in the fourth year.
- (2) Compartments in which babul is the principal species should be thrown open to all cattle, except browsers, in the sixth year.
- (3) As for browsers, each case should be decided on its merits, and the compartments should be thrown open to them for grazing only when the growth is sufficiently high and beyond their reach.